

ARTICLE 304**NEAR NORTHWEST SECTOR POLICIES****NEAR NORTHWEST SECTOR LOCATION AND EXTENT**

The Near Northwest Sector represents approximately nine percent of the City's total land area. In 1980, the Sector's population (156,198) represented 13 percent of the City's total population. The Near Northwest Sector is bounded by the Conrail Railroad on the west and north; the Lodge Freeway on the east; and the southern boundary is formed by the Ford and Jeffries Freeways, the Detroit Terminal Railroad, and Tireman Avenue.

NEAR NORTHWEST PLANNING ISSUES AND FUTURE POTENTIALS

The Near Northwest Sector is a diverse area which contains some of Detroit's most well-preserved and desirable neighborhoods. The Sector also contains deteriorating areas, particularly some commercial strips which often abut sound residential areas. The housing stock is somewhat older than the City-wide average, and the median income was only about 80% of the City-wide average as of 1980. Unemployment is high, as is the percentage of households deriving income from public assistance.

The Sector contains two major institutions, Henry Ford Hospital and the Herman Kiefer complex which houses the City's Health Department. Both institutions are located in the southeastern portion of the Sector.

The Jeffries Freeway, which bisects the Near Northwest Sector, has disrupted the integrity of many adjacent neighborhoods. It runs diagonally and parallel to Grand River Avenue throughout a large portion of the Sector. This has had a negative impact on Grand River, a major thoroughfare, in terms of greatly lessened access, traffic, and activity.

The Near Northwest Sector also has a strong network of neighborhood and community organizations, and many neighborhoods have a high proportion of people strongly interested in the welfare of the City as well as the local community. One major concern expressed by residents of the Near Northwest Sector centered on the need for neighborhood conservation and a strong desire to see more building rehabilitation rather than demolition.

The primary planning objectives for this Sector are to conserve existing housing, construct new housing in several designated areas building upon the strengths of

the Sector (sound housing, institutions, and community interest), and to develop strong local shopping and/or residential areas along commercial strips with general shopping areas being designated at major intersections.

GENERAL POLICIES

The revitalization of the Near Northwest Sector will focus on the conservation of existing housing, neighborhoods, and viable commercial areas.

□ POLICY 304-1: *Near Northwest Land Use*

- Enhance existing land use patterns by lending stronger definition to existing neighborhoods.
- Concentrate local shopping and new residential development along existing commercial corridors into self-sufficient nodes.
- Downzoning of the north side of Grand River between Livernois and Grand Boulevard from B4 (General Business) to a more restrictive classification should be considered.

□ POLICY 304-2: *Near Northwest Residential Development*

In addition to development nodes along commercial corridors generally, provide for the construction of new housing adjacent to the following positive development influences: Oakman Boulevard; Russell Woods Subdivision; Ford Hospital; Metropolitan Hospital; Research Park; Boston-Edison Historic District; the Virginia Park Development Project; and, the Herman-Kiefer Health Complex.

□ POLICY 304-3: *Near Northwest Commercial Development*

- Promote the location of new retail uses in existing shopping areas: the Virginia Park shopping center; the Grand River-Oakman shopping center; Dexter-Davison; or along the Dexter, Linwood, West Chicago, Joy, or Livernois commercial frontages.
- Develop major commercial centers at: Rosa Parks at West Philadelphia; Grand River at West Grand Boulevard; Grand River at Dexter; Dexter at Davison; and Grand River at Oakman.

- Develop smaller commercial centers at: West Grand Boulevard at Linwood; Dexter at Joy Road; Grand River at Joy Road; Livernois at Grand River; Livernois at Lyndon; Wyoming at Schoolcraft; Wyoming at Joy; and, West Chicago at Meyers.
 - Upgrade the Grand River-Oakman retail center to its former status, including a shopping mall on the north side of Grand River east of Oakman.
 - Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of the Riviera Theater.
- ❑ **POLICY 304-4: *Near Northwest Industrial Development***
- Utilize whatever governmental programs or joint development possibilities are available to assist industrial development.
- ❑ **POLICY 304-5: *Near Northwest Transportation System***
- Develop pedestrian and bicycle routes along Oakman Boulevard and other scenic thoroughfares.
- ❑ **POLICY 304-6: *Near Northwest Recreation System***
- Assign the City-owned parking lot on Bishop Playfield to the Recreation Department for use as part of the recreation facility.
 - Expand and improve Salsinger Playground.
 - Increase security and improve senior and handicapped accessibility at Northwestern Recreation Center.

MACKENZIE SUBSECTOR BOUNDARIES AND FEATURES

The Mackenzie Subsector is generally bounded by Tireman Avenue on the south; the Conrail (formerly Penn Central) railroad tracks on the west and north; and, the Detroit Terminal Railroad and Jeffries Freeway (in part) along the east. The Subsector is named after the high school which serves the area.

With the exception of the industrial corridors along the rail lines and the commercial frontage along the major streets, the entire area is residential. The industrial uses surround the area on its west, north, and east edges.

Major features and landmarks in Mackenzie include the Grand River-Oakman shopping center and Oakman Boulevard, which cuts through the Subsector. The Jeffries Freeway is north of Grand River and south of the Lyndon Avenue/Conrail industrial corridor, but pedestrian and vehicular bridges provide for access and interchange between the areas.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES, MACKENZIE SUBSECTOR

This Subsector is in relatively fair to good condition but in need of corrective conservation measures, especially north of West Chicago, to prevent future problems. The variety of housing types reflects the different development periods. The older housing stock is now approaching 70 years in age and is most in need of concentrated maintenance.

As in many other areas, there is an excess of land along thoroughfare frontages zoned for general commercial use which should be modified to reflect existing and desired local commercial and residential uses, and to provide better protection of residential areas from abrasive commercial uses.

Viable commercial uses in this area are ones that provide convenience shopping for adjacent neighborhoods. These uses are now scattered and would better serve the area and provide mutual reinforcement if they could be clustered at strategic points such as major street intersections. The major shopping node at Grand River and Oakman needs revitalization, particularly by redevelopment of the former Sears' site.

Most smaller industrial operations in the area appear viable and should continue to provide a long-term employment and tax base. Many of these are blighting influences on adjacent residential areas, however, and should be better maintained and buffered from nearby housing. Larger industrial holdings that are now vacant are blighting influences and should be actively promoted for reuse.

MACKENZIE SUBSECTOR GOALS

This Subsector is one of the City's older residential areas, and signs of age are apparent. There is a need for improved maintenance and some rehabilitation. With a good spirit of cooperative effort and the implementation of these policies, however, this can become an increasingly desirable residential community with attractive, convenient shopping areas and proximity to a wide range of employment opportunities.

❑ **POLICY 304-7: *Mackenzie Subsector Policies***

- No major changes in land use are recommended for the Mackenzie Subsector.
- Active conservation of homes, support of local businesses, and improvements for certain commercial street frontages and fringe industrial areas will help insure that Mackenzie will remain a viable and livable community.
- The basic housing strategy should start with the fact that the single- and multiple-housing is still predominantly owner-occupied and in generally good condition.
- Monitor existing multiple housing stock and provide appropriate measures to prevent deterioration.
- Provide new multiple housing for adult and senior citizens, especially along West Chicago and Joy or in other locations close to shopping, community facilities, and bus routes.
- Provide proper protection of residential areas from land use conflicts by rerouting truck traffic away from residential streets, providing a higher degree of visual and physical separation and buffering between residential and abrasive non-residential uses, controlling or removing nonconforming uses and concentrating commercial and industrial development on under-utilized sites, providing the necessary site design controls to insure adequate on-site parking and landscaping and/or other buffering from residential areas.
- Provide housing conservation programs in older areas where signs of neglect are appearing.
- In those areas where vacancies indicate a surplus of general commercial land, provide for less intense business use or thoroughfare-oriented residential uses.
- Seek a developer to build new commercial of mixed-use facility on the former Sears' site at Grand River and Oakman.

WINTERHALTER BOUNDARIES AND FEATURES

The Winterhalter Subsector, primarily a residential area, is bounded by Dexter Avenue on the east, Joy Road on the south, the Jeffries Freeway on the west, and the Detroit Terminal Railroad - now Conrail - on the north. The area is divided

by Livernois Avenue, a major north/south thoroughfare. The small amount of industry in the Subsector is located along the Detroit Terminal Railroad.

The median household income for the Winterhalter Subsector is somewhat lower than the Near Northwest Sector median and considerably lower than the City median. The housing stock is aging - nearly two-thirds of it was built during the six-year period between 1922 and 1927. The predominant housing type in this Subsector is the small multiple structure: two flats, four flats, and larger apartment buildings. Less than one-third of the housing is in single-family detached units.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES, WINTERHALTER SUBSECTOR

The area between Livernois and Dexter, south of Cortland to Joy Road, is an area that exhibits a generally low level of maintenance. Vacant structures, abandonment, and subsequent demolition are the major problems in this area. Some of the hardest hit blocks in this area are half vacant land, and as the number and size of vacant lots and the number of vacant structures increases, property values decrease and the likelihood of further abandonments increases.

There is some good housing in this area, and there are blocks with virtually no vacancies, especially in the area near Nardin Park. Virtually all of the abandonment in this area has occurred in the last 15 years. Solutions to the problem will be particularly difficult in this small area because of the low income of the residents.

The Winterhalter Subsector has a problem with traffic congestion on some streets. Many areas lack off-street parking. Many streets are narrow and cannot adequately carry the amount of traffic that flows through the area. This is especially true of streets such as Elmhurst, Boston Boulevard, and West Chicago. Access to Schoolcraft (which terminates at Ewald Circle) creates heavy traffic on Ewald Circle and Oakman Boulevard. Both of these streets are primarily residential and should not carry high volumes of traffic. Ewald Circle is often used as a short-cut to the Jeffries Freeway.

Almost all of the major streets in the Winterhalter Subsector were developed for general commercial uses, with Grand River, Livernois, and Dexter being the major commercial strips. Portions of this commercial frontage are no longer commercially viable and vacant buildings and vacant land are commonplace along some of these streets. It is apparent that the area no longer supports the

amount and type of commercial activity that it previously supported; this condition is common in other parts of the City as well.

WINTERHALTER SUBSECTOR GOALS

The Winterhalter Subsector has many positive features to build upon, i.e., the Russell Woods subdivision (the sound stable community bounded by Livernois, Davison, Dexter and Cortland), as well as Oakman Boulevard and Ewald Circle, and certain potentials for growth and stability along Grand River, Livernois, and Dexter. These features should be reinforced and should be used as anchors in efforts to maintain and rebuild those portions of the Subsector that need development or major rehabilitation. The Winterhalter Subsector requires no major land use changes.

The problems here are difficult in places, but with a coordinated effort on the part of the City, the community, and the local businesses, many improvements can be made. The land that is accruing through the demolition of obsolete structures offers an opportunity for ultimate redevelopment into a renewed well-planned residential community.

❑ POLICY 304-8: *Winterhalter Subsector Policies*

- Provide an appropriate array of programs to check abandonment and to create opportunities for new housing.
- In severely deteriorated areas, consolidate land for redevelopment, rehabilitate existing structures, and create development incentives for the private sector.
- Where indicated, redevelop portions of commercial strips to non-commercial uses. Encourage local commercial, multi-family residential and institutional uses, rather than general commercial uses along these strips.
- Encourage existing industrial uses along the Detroit Terminal Railroad to remain and expand, where feasible, within the existing industrial area.
- Provide improved buffering between industry and abutting residential areas north of Ewald Circle.

DURFEE SUBSECTOR BOUNDARIES AND FEATURES

The Durfee Subsector is bounded by the Conrail line, formerly the Detroit Terminal Railroad, just north of Oakman Boulevard, the western Highland Park boundary, and the Lodge Freeway, Clairmount, Joy Road, and Dexter. The Subsector is residential.

Major institutional features in the Durfee Subsector include the Detroit Public School campus of Central High, Roosevelt Elementary, and Durfee Middle School, the Sacred Heart Seminary on Chicago Boulevard, and Metropolitan Hospital.

An industrial corridor borders the northern edge of the Subsector and contains several businesses whose products or services are well-known to Detroit residents, such as the Hostess Cake Bakery and Focus Hope.

The population demographic characteristics are similar to City averages and to the neighboring Winterhalter Subsector. Housing is predominately in small multiples but one-third is in apartment buildings of 9 or more units. Only about one in five housing units are single-family. There was a 19% decrease in housing stock between 1970 and 1980, mostly in multi-family dwelling units, and a 29% decrease in population. Income levels are lower than the City-wide and Sector-wide medians.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES, DURFEE SUBSECTOR

Broken porches are relatively frequent among the brick homes in the Subsector and these are by far the predominant structure type. The need for exterior paint and trim is evident for many structures throughout the Subsector and garages are almost universally dilapidated in the Subsector, except for those located in either the Boston-Edison or Oakman Boulevard districts. It is apparent that much of Durfee's housing stock is of an age and condition that, although still better than much of the rest of the City's older stock because it is predominantly brick, is nearing a point where significant reinvestment will be necessary to halt decay and further loss of units.

Many of the apartments in the Subsector, particularly along Chicago and Woodrow Wilson, are in serious trouble due to a complex of factors and further demolitions are possible. Stable apartment housing does exist north of Davison along Dexter, along sections of LaSalle, and east of Central High School. This

area also includes a large number of three-family flats, located along narrow streets; auto parking and storage is a problem.

Perhaps the poorest housing within Durfee is the small area east of the Lodge Freeway east to the Highland Park boundary. Although there are a few attractive units of frame housing there, many of the units are barely standard and numerous units are abandoned.

The industrial area north of Oakman Boulevard should remain industrial and, with proper buffering, the industrial area south of Oakman could be expanded, if required.

The industrial area between Linwood and Dexter near Doris should remain industrial with possible minor expansion on the north side of Doris. Buffering along Doris should be improved to protect the adjoining residential from industrial noise and traffic.

DURFEE SUBSECTOR GOALS

In this area of predominately multi-family housing units, some of the problems stem from the relatively low demand for apartments versus single-family homes. With the trends toward smaller household sizes, however, and as ultimate resurgence of the City as a desirable place to live, the resulting market forces should stimulate a revitalization of this area. The following policies are designed to promote and facilitate this revitalization.

❑ POLICY 304-9: *Durfee Subsector Policies*

- No major land use changes are recommended for the Durfee Subsector. However, a comprehensive housing rehabilitation and neighborhood reinvestment program is needed in much of the area, giving particular attention to the unique needs of senior citizens and female heads of households.
- Make every effort to develop a market for apartment housing in this area and rehabilitate as many existing apartment buildings as is feasible, especially along Boston, Chicago, and Rochester between Dexter and Linwood, and provide infill development in the form of new residential and convenience shopping uses. If it is determined that rehabilitation and repopulation is not feasible, remove the vacant, abandoned structures as soon as practicable.

- In highly dense areas, sell vacant lots to adjoining property owners for off-street parking or yard space.
- Consider imaginative reuses for larger lots created by apartment building demolition.
- Promote new apartment housing for the former Crittendon Hospital site and the area near the Detroit Repertory Theater on Woodrow Wilson.
- Encourage use of Federal tax credits for rehabilitation of architecturally significant apartment buildings.
- Encourage facade improvements, better maintenance, removal of abandoned structures, and more residential uses in the healthy commercial areas along Rosa Parks and Linwood.
- Encourage general commercial uses along Davison and Livernois. Within the existing industrial area, support existing industries and encourage reuse of vacant facilities and more intensive use of land, buffering adjacent housing areas. Near the City boundary, coordinate planning with Highland Park.
- Find new uses for vacant facilities created by institutional closings.
- Provide additional playgrounds and playlots where demand indicates.

ROSA PARKS SUBSECTOR BOUNDARIES AND FEATURES

The Rosa Parks Subsector is bounded by the Ford Freeway (I-94) on the south, the Jeffries Freeway (I-96) on the west, Clairmount Avenue and Joy Road on the north, and the Lodge Freeway (US-10) on the east. The area is predominantly residential, along with schools (such as Northwestern High School), churches, and commercial facilities serving the immediate neighborhood. Henry Ford Hospital is a facility of region-wide importance. There is also a small industrial corridor at the Subsector's southeastern corner.

The Rosa Parks Subsector has led redevelopment and rebuilding in Detroit with hundreds of new housing units occupied in Research Park, Virginia Park, near Henry Ford Hospital and along the Grand Boulevard.

Because of these urban renewal areas and the fact that most of the other housing in this Subsector is the oldest, and poorest, in the Sector, the Rosa Parks Subsector has three distinct types of residential areas: new family housing, senior

housing, and the older housing which existed before urban renewal and which is typical of older housing in the other subsectors, i.e., mostly small multiples with some larger apartment buildings and single-family homes. Population has decreased steadily since 1950 due to urban renewal as well as general attrition and abandonment.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES, ROSA PARKS SUBSECTOR

Much of the area south of West Grand Boulevard is in disrepair and some of the neighborhoods near Grand River Avenue have been affected. Most of the buildings along Heritage Place (formerly Dumbarton) have been torn down. Changing market conditions and increased operating costs have resulted in a very significant shrinkage of the large multiple-housing buildings in the Near Northwest Sector. The families that once occupied these buildings (small, or lower income Black households) have settled into flats or taken apartments in the outer portions of the City.

An aging housing stock and a population affected by continuing high levels of poverty and unemployment are an inauspicious mix. Simply stated, a household which cannot pay its mortgage or its heating bills is not going to be able to invest in a new roof or a new furnace. Over the coming years, maintenance levels in the still solid neighborhoods must be closely watched, especially the large multiples and the frame housing. Joy and Linwood are severely distressed as commercial streets.

Industrial development in Rosa Parks is confined to the area along or near the Grand Trunk Railroad and Conrail tracks at the southeastern corner of the Subsector. There is a large amount of vacant land that is zoned for manufacturing which could accommodate many new jobs. The Rosa Parks Subsector, as in the case of the remainder of the Sector, is deficient in recreation space.

Ways must be found to preserve and enhance the basically solid (and, in many cases, quite attractive) neighborhoods in the Subsector. Much of the Subsector's housing was, when new, among the most exclusive in the City and even now remains among the most attractive of the City's low- and moderate-income communities.

Portions of the residential area to the south of West Grand Boulevard are in need of many improvements. This is the oldest, and probably the most debilitated housing in the Near Northwest Sector. With excellent access to the New Center area and to Henry Ford Hospital, this community could be seen as a choice

location, but the consolidation of vacant land and the development of new housing is needed here, along with the rehabilitation of the more viable blocks.

The Virginia Park Urban Renewal project area is located in a community of well-constructed, viable housing which had suffered from the effects of the 1967 civil disturbances. Since then, the depopulation of large apartments and the effects of continuing high unemployment have been further negative factors. Continued implementation of infill housing and housing rehabilitation and completion of the major housing projects are needed.

Historic designation may be helpful in many portions of Rosa Parks where development has reached and generally passed 50 years of age. LaSalle Gardens, the Dexter Boulevard frontage, and other areas may qualify. If the formal procedures of historic designation are not deemed appropriate, it is nonetheless important for the City to recognize the valuable nature of these residential settings.

The conditions along Grand River Avenue and other commercial streets such as Joy Road are an extremely negative factor and give a very poor impression of a community where the housing is by no means in bad condition. Residential and local commercial development should be encouraged and abrasive general commercial land use discouraged. Also, traffic controls and signage on Grand River are a holdover from its days as a major arterial (i.e., before the Jeffries Freeway was opened) and perhaps should be reviewed.

The site of Olympia Stadium (now closed) should be examined for possible reuse, when it becomes available. Also, vacant land on Heritage Place (formerly Dumbarton) should be developed.

ROSA PARKS SUBSECTOR GOALS

This Subsector is one of the oldest areas of the City and has many problems. It is, however, well-located in terms of access to many important centers and many of the remaining structures are interesting and attractive architecturally. Because of its location and character, this area should be a good candidate for recycling by the private sector once the right conditions are in place. The following policies are designed to address immediate problems as well as help begin the process of renewal.

□ **POLICY 304-10: *Rosa Parks Subsector Policies***

- Concentrate efforts to rebuild this Subsector in the area south of West Grand Boulevard.
- Change West Grand Boulevard east of 14th Street from general business uses to high density residential use, or some other appropriate land use type.
- Encourage medium-density residential development on the vacant land on Heritage Place (formerly Dumbarton).
- South of West Grand Boulevard, consolidate vacant land and develop new housing; rehabilitate viable housing.
- In the Virginia Park urban renewal project area, complete major housing projects, especially rehabilitation and infill housing.
- Change the Grand River and Joy Road local commercial areas to a residential use.
- Consider historic significance of LaSalle Park and vicinity, the Dexter Boulevard frontage, and other qualified areas.